The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accurate and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor according to the Federation's policies, and labor's fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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MANDATORY BUY UNITED WAR BONDS

Thru Payroll Savings

WHOLE NO. 1788 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, JULY 17, 1945 | GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer | VOL. 35, NO. 29

LABOR, USA

Washington, D. C.—In its second "Labor, USA" broadcast over the ABC network, the American Federation of Labor presented several feature articles to supplement the news. These articles follow:

How To Reduce Strikes

By WILLIAM GREEN

President of the American Federation of Labor

Recently the newspapers again have blossomed with stories about strikes. Headlines last week told us with a great deal of enthusiasm that fifty thousand workers had quit their jobs. But, strangely enough, not a word was said about the fifty million workers who remained faithfully at their tasks. That, apparently, was not news.

I want to assure the American people that the American Federation of Labor is completely sincere in its no-strike pledge for the duration of the war. Until Japan surrenders we will not excuse or condone or sanction any strike for any cause. We are proud of the fact that only a *small* percentage of those engaged in strikes at this time, or at any time during the war, have been AFL members. In proof of that statement, let me cite the official figures of the Department of Labor which show that only 28 percent of the time lost by strikes last year was attributable to workers who belong to American Federation of Labor unions. That figure is especially significant when you consider that the seven million members of the American Federation of Labor constitute more than half of the organized workers in the nation.

But it would be a mistake for us to ignore the fact that current strikes are symptomatic of a growing unrest among American workers. This unrest results from concrete and painful causes.

First, take-home wages have been sharply cut by reduced overtime. Second, many workers have lost their relatively well-paid jobs in war industries because of cutbacks and the only new jobs available to them offer much lower wages. Third, the failure of the government to act promptly in providing adequate unemployment compensation insurance has filled war workers with fear that they will be left stranded when the war ends.

To correct this situation, the American Federation of Labor proposes that free collective bargaining be restored so that hourly wage rates may be lifted wherever no price increase will result. This will permit workers to meet high living costs without causing inflation.

As a further step, we recommend that Congress permit minimum wage levels to be raised to 72 cents an hour in industry. This would provide a minimum wage of $28 a week *before* taxes. Certainly, no American family can get along on less at present day prices.

Finally, we call upon Congress to enact without delay the unemployment compensation proposal urged by President Truman, under which the federal government will supplement state funds so that workers with families will receive as much as $25 a week in unemployment insurance for 26 weeks.

I am confident that such action will reduce strikes to a minimum.

Your Postwar Job

By BORIS SHISHKIN

AFL Economist

What are the employment prospects after the war? Here is another report in the nation-wide survey conducted by the American Federation of Labor on postwar job opportunities.

Textile and clothing industries provide one of the biggest sources of employment in the United States. They employ more than two million workers. Most of them belong to the American Federation of Labor unions.

Lloyd Klenert, secretary of the United Textile Workers of America, reports that full employment now prevails in the textile industry.

It will take from two to three years after the war to make up the deficit in textiles. This means full employment for at least that long. Better wages and decent incomes will help support the lasting growth of the textile industry after the war. There is plenty of room for expansion.

David Dubinsky, president of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, reports that at present there is some unemployment and extensive part-time work in that trade. There is a shortage in material, especially cotton goods. The demand for women's apparel is far greater than the industry can supply. As soon as textile fabrics are once more in good supply, everyone will again be busy. We can look forward to the time when the industry is likely to provide more jobs than it does today. The union, which was instrumental in developing the famous program of cooperation with employers, is now working on its number one postwar program: to make sure not only that the American woman is the best-dressed of all, but also that American incomes keep her the best-dressed in the world.

Joseph McCurdy, president of the United Garment Workers, reports full employment in the manufacture of work clothing, and men's clothing. Here, too, severe shortages of fabrics and other fabrics have cut deeply into production. Especially serious is the resulting shortage of overalls and other work clothes badly needed in war plants and on the farms. Full employment in this and all other branches of the clothing industry is assured with the resumption of high wages and ample buying power among all workers after the war.

Next week I will report on the job outlook in the aircraft industry: America's wartime problem-child.

Your Faithful Servants

By JAMES B. BURNS

President, American Federation Government Employes

Consider this a thank-you note to you, the American people, from about two million of your employees—the men and women who work for the United States Government. Through your representatives in Congress they have just obtained increased pay and substantial improvements in working conditions.

Under Public Law 106, for the first time, a basic work-week of 40 hours is set for white-collar Government employees. Under the same act, for the first time, they receive a night differential of 10 percent, and recognition of the principle of premium pay for overtime work as a permanent measure. Overtime has been paid, though not at full time-and-a-half rate, to these white-collar workers as war measure; but now full time-and-a-half will be paid, except in the upper brackets, as a recognized Government policy, year in and year out.

Enactment of this law brings to realization in large degree four major objectives of the American Federation of Government Employees—a basic pay increase, true time-and-a-half for overtime, the night differential, and complete recognition of periodic salary advancements for employees whose work is satisfactory. In the past these advancements have been granted beyond a certain point unless the employees' work was rated very good or excellent. The AFGE had the assistance of many personnel authorities and many members of Congress in its efforts to win the pay increase and other benefits, but the campaign for eliminating restrictions on salary advancements was entirely its own.

At almost the same time this general pay measure became law, Public Law 134 also went on the statute books. This grants comparable benefits to about 300,000 field employees of the Post Office Department—clerks, carriers, custodial workers and others. They, too, get base pay increases, time-and-a-half for overtime, a night differential and compact hours of duty, that is, eight hours' work in not more than 10 consecutive hours, including split shifts.

These two bills mean a lot to the employees of the American people, and as a representative of those employees I assure you they are grateful to you and to the Congress that carried out your wishes.

SAY, LISTEN!

For the rest of this year, the AFL presents each Saturday evening at 6:45 P.M., EWT, over the nation-wide network of the American Broadcasting Company a radio news-magazine, featuring the latest news at home and abroad and special reports by expert commentators on important labor problems. This program is listed in the radio columns of your newspaper as "Labor-U.S.A." Our own subtitle for the program is "The American Federationist of the Air." Don't miss these bright, newsy broadcasts! Listen every Saturday night!

Senate Group Urges 65-Cent Wage Floor As Health And Decency Standard

Washington, D. C.—Congress was asked by the Senate Committee to declare that any hourly wage below 65 cents an hour is "substandard" for American workers trying to live in health and decency.

More than ten million American workers still are paid less than that figure, the committee reported.

At present the National War Labor Board holds that 55 cents an hour is the minimum standard. The American Federation of Labor has repeatedly demanded that the minimum be raised to 72 cents an hour.

The Senate resolution, approved by Senators Pepper, LaFollette, Tunnell and Aiken, would not be compulsory at first.

It would permit unions and employers to negotiate wage rate increases up to the 65 cents an hour level without requiring WLB approval.

But would the resolution, if adopted by Congress, prevent the WLB from setting a higher minimum? Would it determine such a rate to be necessary to fulfillment of the requirements of announced policy?

"Despite the relatively high level of wartime wages," the committee's report declared, "millions of American workers and their families are today forced to exist on earnings insufficient to provide even the barest minimum standard of living consistent with health and decency.

"If this resolution is adopted, the maximum possible aggregate cost of wage increases in the industries affected would be about $4,000,000,000 a year.

"This figure, however, is based upon the unrealistic assumption that all workers receiving less than 65 cents an hour would immediately be raised to 65 cents," the group said.

A more realistic estimate, the committee added, "for which the War Labor Board is the authority, places the total annual cost at $700,000,000."

"The cost of the proposal can be absorbed by American industry without substantially affecting current profit levels and in most instances within the limits of existing price ceilings," the report added.

"As for the postwar period, the guarantees of continued profits provided by Congress in the revenue laws give substantial assurance of the ability of industry in general to absorb whatever cost would be involved if the resolution is adopted."

Ball-Burton-Hatch Bill Blasted

Washington, D. C.—Labor's case against the Ball-Burton-Hatch bill, which would destroy the labor movement as we know it, was forcefully presented by AFL President William Green in the following article prepared for publication in the Scripps-Howard newspapers:

By WILLIAM GREEN

President, American Federation of Labor

The Ball-Burton-Hatch bill seeks to turn the clock back in America. The three prime Senators who sponsor it seem to have forgotten the century of economic oppression which preceded the decade of industrial democracy the nation has enjoyed since the enactment of the National Labor Relations Act. Their proposal would strangle that charter of labor's freedom and return American workers to economic slavery.

Repressive legislation, like the Ball-Burton-Hatch bill, has no place in our country. Its effect would be to create unrest and resentment. Instead of promoting better industrial relations between workers and employers, it would provide ammunition for those who seek to convert the workers to Communism.

Industrial peace will be attained in America only through organization and through free collective bargaining. When labor is organized, when organization of employers as well as workers. When and if free collective bargaining is sincerely accepted and applied by American industry, industrial peace will prevail, the chief cause of recurring industrial strife will disappear and stabilized industrial relations can be established.

The present bill would be the greatest Government encroachment upon the field of collective bargaining, as is proposed under the Ball-Burton-Hatch bill. The great need of the post-war period will be to prevail upon the Government to surrender controls over collective bargaining and to increase them.

Before attempting to analyze the provisions of the Ball-Burton-Hatch bill, let us consider briefly the professed aims. Its genesis and the methods being employed to ballyhoo it.

The big argument used to promote this legislation is that its purpose is to protect the public during the war, the civilian apparel industry is likely to provide more jobs than it does today. The union, which was instrumental in developing the famous program of cooperation with employers, is now working on its number one postwar program: to make sure not only that the American woman is the best-dressed of all, but also that American incomes keep her the best-dressed in the world.

Joseph McCurdy, president of the United Garment Workers, reports full employment in the manufacture of work clothing, and men's clothing. Here, too, severe shortages of fabrics and other fabrics have cut deeply into production. Especially serious is the resulting shortage of overalls and other work clothes badly needed in war plants and on the farms. Full employment in this and all other branches of the clothing industry is assured with the resumption of high wages and ample buying power among all workers after the war.

Next week I will report on the job outlook in the aircraft industry: America's wartime problem-child.

But this argument is a subterfuge. It is a smoke screen to deceive the American people. The real purpose is to protect employers who are unwilling to obey the law of the land and wish to continue using unfair methods against their workers. It is a device to destroy the free collective bargaining system.

The genius behind the Ball-Burton-Hatch bill, the inspirational source of the proposal, is Senator Burton. He declared it was "slanted from the employers' point of view." Senator Morse has no connection with organized labor. In fact, he has denounced the public members of the War Labor Board before he was elected to the Senate on the Republican Party ticket. His views are especially significant because he is an expert on labor-management relations.

For further evidence, let us investigate the genesis of this legislation. The research was financed by a group of employers and employer representatives. The drafting of the bill was entrusted to a lawyer who has played both sides of the economic fence in pursuit of fees rather than principles. Never at any time before the bill was introduced was any qualified representative of labor consulted or asked for advice. Yet labor is chiefly affected by the bill's provisions.

These circumstances cause labor to question the sincerity and good faith of the Ball-Burton-Hatch bill. We feel just as suspicious about it as the American people would be if Herman Goering were to propose an amendment to the United States Constitution.

The chief interest displayed in the Ball-Burton-Hatch bill has been manifested by a few powerful newspaper publishers who have devoted large quantities of space to editorials and news stories in support of newspaper publishers over this legislation is contemplated. The excitement of these newspaper publishers over this legislation is baffling to behold. It is not contagious so far as the public is concerned. That isn't surprising, for these publishers have been against everything the public has voted for over a good many years now.

The heart of the bill, line by line, title by title and paragraph by paragraph, the more objectionable features I discover. But I can summarize its major faults as follows:

1—It would outlaw voluntary arbitration. The wage earners of America will never accept this restriction upon their freedom. Compulsory arbitration has been opposed by the trade union movement since its earliest days as a step toward involuntary servitude. It will not give up that fight now.

2—The bill would revive the nefarious practice of permitting courts to issue injunctions against labor. That practice was killed by the Norris-La Guardia act.

3—The right of contract is seriously impaired by the bill which would prohibit labor and management from entering into voluntary closed shop agreements, even in interstate commerce, but not elsewhere.

4—The bill would nullify important protections of the Wagner act and limit its scope by exempting small employers from obligations required by industry engaged in interstate commerce.

Let us consider one final and very significant factor. Since the passage of the Norris-La Guardia Act and the National Labor Relations Act, the courts and the public have come to understand the purposes of these epoch-making laws. It has been a tedious process, but it has resulted in establishing clearly the rules of the game. Labor and industry know their rights and obligations and the public can proceed with their postwar plans on a certain basis.

But picture for a moment what would happen in the postwar period if the Ball-Burton-Hatch bill were enacted. A brand-new series of prolonged court tests would have to be undertaken. The constitutionality of the measure would be challenged. Its effect on existing labor laws would have to be interpreted. Meanwhile, all industry would be thrown into confusion and uncertainty. The chances of speedy recovery in postwar America would vanish. Does the Ball-Burton-Hatch bill merit taking such risks?

It is difficult for me to believe that even the sponsors of this legislation feel that it has any possibilities of being enacted. Their purpose, then, must be to put organized labor on the defensive in the postwar period when vigorous action will be needed to meet the problems of peace in America, with justice for all. Labor will not be sidetracked from this objective.

UNION WORKERS EXCEL IN ARMY ENGINEER UNIT

Washington, D. C.—An outfit of Army engineers—many of them union men skilled in construction, mechanical, metal and other trades in civilian life—is one of the first Army units which has already seen combat action in both the European and Pacific theaters, according to an Army announcement. The outfit, the 1st Engineer Special Brigade, has added victory in the Okinawa campaign to its impressive record of European battles.

An important part of the 700,000 Army Engineers now in service is the nucleus of 13,000 enlisted specialists recruited during 1940 from the ranks of organized labor. Labor has since contributed many thousands of skilled members to make the Engineer Corps one of the Army's most honored branches.

AFL Asks Sweeping Action To Cut Industrial Unrest

AFL Asks Senate To Ratify San Francisco Charter

Washington, D. C.—AFL President William Green strongly urged the United States Senate to ratify the San Francisco Charter immediately.

His testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee provided a climactic conclusion to public hearings and was swiftly followed by a unanimous committee vote endorsing the international agreement. It is expected that the charter will be ratified by an overwhelming vote within a few weeks.

In presenting the AFL's views, Mr. Green said some of the recommendations presented by the federation to the U. S. delegation at San Francisco had been adopted in essence and incorporated in the charter. These recommendations dealt with the protection of human rights.

Mr. Green declared that the charter makes possible "collective bargaining" among the nations of the world for the preservation of world peace, based upon justice, and for the prevention of future wars. He continued:

"We believe our government should ratify this charter and take leadership in developing the methods and agencies of peaceful progress and betterment as well as in securing us against recurrence of world wars.

"Unless we use our technical and scientific knowledge and our experience in human cooperation to promote the welfare of mankind, we are in danger of inviting our own destruction.

"We should take advantage of the opportunity presented by the United Nations Charter and in a spirit of humility and tolerance learn to coordinate our national efforts with those of all other nations to advance the welfare and interests of all.

"While it is too much to expect to reach a perfect goal in an imperfect world, the people of the United States have a right to demand guarantees against recurring wars and the protection of peace-loving people throughout the entire world."

Green Confers With Schwellenbach On Reorganizing Labor Department

Washington, D. C.—Secretary of Labor Schwellenbach, in first conferences with AFL President William Green, discussed plans for reorganization of the Department of Labor.

The AFL, at its annual conventions, has repeatedly demanded that all federal bureaus dealing with labor problems be centralized within the Labor Department. Mr. Green conveyed these views to Secretary Schwellenbach, who indicated his agreement.

In a newspaper article distributed by the International News Service, Mr. Green disclosed his ideas about the reorganization of the Labor Department in more detail.

He charged that this department is the only one in the Federal Government to "suffer multiple casualties in this war." While other federal agencies expanded and took on new functions, Mr. Green said, the Labor Department's powers were drastically amputated." Yet, at the same time, he pointed out, "new agencies were created by the dozen, completely outside the jurisdiction of the Department of Labor, to handle important labor problems.

"The result has been confusion," Mr. Green declared, "which in many cases has laid down its own rules, sometimes in conflict with other agencies. Frequently the various new boards and commissions have competed with each other for the right to determine policies and decide cases.

"Labor unions have been shunted from pillar to post trying to obtain authoritative rulings. The lack of cohesion has contributed to the lack of a clear national labor policy, undesirable to workers and employers alike.

"Now that the nation is entering an economic period unprecedented period, the need of consolidating the various federal labor agencies becomes more acute than ever."

Among the specific, immediate changes recommended by Mr. Green in the newspaper article were:

1—Return to the Labor Department the United States Employment Service, which will be required to place in new jobs millions of displaced war workers and ex-servicemen.

2—Similar action with respect to the Federal Apprentice Training setup, which will have to undertake supervision of the training and retraining of servicemen for civilian jobs.

3—Transfer to the National Labor Relations Board, the National War Labor Board and other quasi-judicial agencies in the labor field under the Department of Labor for "bookkeeping purposes," while they should retain complete independence in policy-making functions.

Veteran Trying To Unseat Anti-Labor Rep. Smith

Alexandria, Va.—A new David has taken the political arena to challenge the anti-union Goliath of the 8th Congressional District of Virginia, Rep. Howard W. Smith.

He is Major Tate, who has made previous unsuccessful attempts to unseat Smith by other candidates. Major James C. Tate, an overseas veteran of this war, has thrown his hat into the ring against the incumbent union-hater for the Democratic nomination, which is equivalent to election.

Although the primaries are still more than a year off, Major Tate said he will start an active campaign immediately.

And in outlining his platform, Major Tate emphasized that he will uphold the right of labor to organize and bargain collectively. Rep. Smith is one of the authors of the obnoxious Connally-Smith Act and has supported practically every anti-labor bill in Congress.

Major Tate, who served overseas in the Civilian Conservation Service Command, retired from the Army last March and has since been actively prosecuting claims as the legislative representative of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. His platform calls for support of President Truman's policies, full employment through development of industries in his district, adequate legislation to protect veterans' income for farmers and State action to eliminate the poll tax in Virginia.

Nazi Labor Front Being Purged

Washington, D. C.—The de-nazification of German labor organizations in the American zone of occupation is now in its final phase, the War Department reported in a review of the labor policies of the Allied Military Government and the progress made in carrying them out.

The initial step toward restoring free labor in Germany is the complete liquidation of the German Labor Front which was the Hitler-created vehicle for the elimination of democratic trade unions, the War Department said.

At the same time the Manpower Division of the United States Group Control council is engaged in the tremendous task of channeling labor into the industries which have been given priority for restoration, such as mines, railroads and public utilities.

It is impossible to re-establish free labor overnight in a country where most of the industrial facilities are reduced to rubble, while the workers are still dazed by the destruction wrought and where thousands of young men are still prisoners of war, it was pointed out.

The German Labor Front is now closed and is in the process of final liquidation. American authorities are removing and arresting Nazi functionaries in the labor field all members of the Nazi party and all supporters of Nazism in these offices because of administrative necessity, convenience or expediency.

It is the aim of the United States government to remove every obstacle which stands in the way of free trade union restoration, but American authorities do not propose to organize the workers, the War Department statement said. That is being left to the Germans themselves.

Green Offers 3-Point Program To Correct Causes Of Recent Strikes

Washington, D. C.—Warning the nation of growing labor unrest, AFL President William Green offered a three-point program to overcome its "concrete and painful causes."

In a nation-wide broadcast, entitled "Strikes CAN Be Reduced," Mr. Green urgently recommended the following steps:

1—Restoration of free collective bargaining so that hourly wage rates can be lifted wherever no price increases will result. This, he said, will make up for loss of overtime pay and permit workers to meet high living costs without causing inflation.

2—Raising minimum wage rates to 72 cents an hour. This would permit a minimum weekly wage of $28 before taxes and no American family can get along on less at present-day prices, Mr. Green said.

3—Enactment by Congress without delay of the Truman unemployment compensation plan under which the federal government will supplement state funds so that jobless workers with families will receive as much as $25 a week in unemployment insurance for 26 weeks.

"I am confident that such action will reduce strikes to a minimum," Mr. Green declared.

The AFL chief took the newspapers to task for building up strike scares and ignoring the great majority who stuck to the job. He said the headlines emphasize that fifty thousand workers struck, but not a word appears about the fifty million who remained faithfully at their tasks.

"That, apparently, was not news," Mr. Green commented caustically.

The Federation president strongly reiterated the AFL's no-strike pledge for the duration and declared that until Japan surrenders, the AFL will not excuse or condone or sanction any strike for any cause." He added:

"We are proud of the fact that only a small percentage of those engaged in strikes at this time, or at any time during the war, have been AFL members." In proof of that statement, let me cite the official figures of the Department of Labor which show that only 28 percent of the time lost by strikes last year was attributable to workers who belong to American Federation of Labor unions. That figure is especially significant when you consider that the seven million members of the American Federation of Labor constitute more than half of the organized workers in the nation."

AFL WORKERS MAKING NEW KICKLESS CANNON

Washington, D. C.—The new kickless cannons, the 57mm and the 75mm, battle-tested in Europe, now highly effective against the Japs, give the infantry soldier the striking power of field artillery, without need to consider terrain, highway conditions or weight of the weapon, Army Ordnance reveals.

Made by AFL workers at American Type Founders, Inc., Cowdrey Machine Division, Dominion Engineering, Ltd., Montreal, Canada, and the Miller Printing Machine Company, Pittsburgh, Pa., these recoilless rifles resemble rockets and embody all the principles of standard field artillery.

AFL TEAMSTER CITED AS NAVY WAR HERO

Washington, D. C.—An AFL Teamster, now a Boatswain's Mate in the Navy, risked fire and explosion aboard a battered minesweeper to help save a crew of 200 men, according to officially cited by the Navy Department.

With the ship's passageways in flames, Flanagan helped to break through to the forward mess hall where many men were trapped under a provision hatch. He helped a shipmate to open the hatch, directed the men to safety, then went "topside" to man a fire-extinguisher, enabling others trapped below to be saved. Earlier he had distinguished himself at his post as a gun captain. Even after he abandoned ship, Flanagan kept wounded men afloat with his life jacket though he could not swim himself.